It’s a terrible thing to realize that hardly a workday goes by without a construction worker falling off a scaffold to his or her death. And those who survive scaffold falls are often crippled for the remainder of their life.

These tragedies are sometimes caused by faulty design or poor construction. But in most cases the basic cause is poor maintenance or improper use, something that you can correct.

Typical normal people “keep both feet on the ground.” And typical normal construction workers keep both feet on the scaffold. Here’s how you can be sure to keep your feet there:

- Inspect scaffolds daily before you trust your life to them. Check guardrails, connectors, fastenings, footings, tie-ins and bracing.
- Check to see that platforms are closely boarded, fenced, and securely fastened.
- Don’t stockpile materials on scaffolds. Remove all tools and leftover materials at the end of the day.
- Never overload scaffolds. Pile necessary materials over ledger and bearer points.
- Help protect scaffolds; don’t bang into them with equipment or materials.
- Keep platforms and areas near scaffold clear of debris, unneeded equipment or material and anything else that might cause you to slip or trip.

If you never work on a scaffold before or had erected a scaffold in the past like the one you had been assigned, make sure you address this issue with your foreman. It is important that every employee understand they have a choice about working at elevation – a choice about how to work any time your feet are not on the ground.

We will not ask you to work around any fall exposure without the proper training and the proper equipment. We expect that you use ladders and scaffolding the right way, by following our strict safety policies. We expect you to use any type of elevating equipment the right way, with the proper safety equipment.

If you are new on the jobsite make sure you mention it to your foreman and your safety advisor. There should be a safety orientation conducted by your safety advisor regarding the
rules and policies of the company on scaffolds. Questions are always important and there is no such thing as a bad question.

Give a scaffold the respect it deserves, and it'll serve you as a convenient work-platform. Use this same respect for every tool and equipment you use to avoid any hazards to you or your co-workers.

Tags:
safety

Toolbox Talk:
Scaffolds
Accident Prevention